GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:186
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2005
AMENDMENT REPEAL OF FOREST CONSERVATION ACT
Chavda Shri Harisinh Pratapsinh;Khan Shri Mohammad Tahir;Kushwaha Shri Narendra Kumar;Mahato Shri Bir Sing;Munshiram Shri

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to amend/repeal the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) benefits being accrued to Adivasis from the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

(e) whether this Act has been hampering the construction of metalled roads; and

(f) if so, details thereof alongwith the remedial steps proposed/taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is a regulatory Act, not prohibitory.

(d) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 deals with non-forestry utilisation of forest lands. For the development of forest dwellers including adivasis, Central Government has granted general approval on 3rd January 2005 under this Act, for infrastructure development projects like school, dispensary/hospital, electric lines, drinking water, rain water harvesting structure, minor irrigation canal, non-conventional sources of energy, skill upgradation/vocational training centre, power sub-stations etc. Further, 510 forest villages have been converted into revenue villages in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttaranchal so far. Also, 3.65 lakh ha. forest land has been diverted for regularisation of pre-1980 eligible encroachments. To protect the rights on forest lands, Central Government vide letter dated 21-12-2004 and subsequent letter dated 12-5-2005 has also issued directions to the State Governments /Union Territory Administrations not to evict forest dwellers including adivasis (tribals) from forest lands without proper verification.

(e) No Sir. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has already issued detailed guidelines on 30th April, 2005 for upgradation of `Kutchcha` roads constructed in forest areas prior to 1980, to `Pucca` roads, and such conversions do not attract the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(f) Does not arise.